

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 87

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 93

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 87—Relative to people of faith.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 24, 2012.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 87, Anderson. People of faith.

This measure would resolve that the Legislature affirms, among other things, that tolerance by the government toward people of faith is constitutionally guaranteed and necessary to allow an unimpeded flow of good that positively impacts and transforms lives.

WHEREAS, The First Amendment to the United States Constitution provides, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances”; and

WHEREAS, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that Americans “combine the notions of religion and liberty so intimately in their minds, that it is impossible to make them conceive of one without the other”; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson wrote to the Rev. Samuel Miller on January 23, 1808, “Everyone must act according to the dictates of his own reason, and mine tells me that civil powers alone have been given to the President of the United States, and no authority to direct the religious exercises of his constituents”; and

WHEREAS, Franklin D. Roosevelt stated, “Where freedom of religion has been attacked, the attack has come from sources opposed to democracy. Where democracy has been overthrown, the spirit of free worship has disappeared. And where religion and democracy have vanished, good faith and reason in international affairs have given way to strident ambition and brute force”; and

WHEREAS, Religious sponsored schools educate more than 5,488,000 pupils enrolled in preschool and kindergarten and grades 1 to 12, inclusive, which is 10 percent of all United States’ pupils, in 33,366 schools, which is 25 percent of all schools in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Two thousand two hundred eighty orphanages and 5,297 children’s homes are provided and maintained by the Catholic Church alone; and

WHEREAS, Over 2,500 children from 19 countries found new homes with adoptive families through All God’s Children International; and

WHEREAS, Holt International is an adoption agency that strives to give children the love they need and deserve regardless of race and nationality.

It is the largest adoption agency in the United States that in its 55 years of existence has brought together 40,000 children with adoptive families in the United States. In 2010, Holt International placed 749 children in American homes, and served 36,972 children throughout the world, though with expenses of only \$23,940,959; and

WHEREAS, Close to one million students and some 65,000 professors serve in the 230 religiously affiliated universities and colleges in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Over 110 United States colleges and universities were founded by Catholic sisters. Elizabeth Ann Seton, who was a widow, mother, founder of Sisters of Charity, and the first American-born saint, established the nation's first free Catholic school; and

WHEREAS, In 5,774 elementary schools and 1,206 secondary schools, and 1,822 schools with a waiting list for admission, Catholic school student enrollment for the current academic year is 2,065,872 with 1,467,694 enrollments in elementary and middle school, and 598,178 enrollments in secondary school. Minority student Catholic school enrollment is at 30.2 percent of the total enrollment, which is 624,878 pupils, and non-Catholic enrollment is 14.9 percent of the total enrollment, which is 307,458 pupils; and

WHEREAS, Religious institutions, with an operating budget close to \$100 billion, run parishes, primary and secondary schools, nursing homes, retreat centers, hospitals, and other charitable establishments, and employ more than one million workers; and

WHEREAS, The Catholic Church demonstrates its commitment to educate children, particularly within the inner cities and urban areas, where today 43 percent of the schools are located despite population losses and great financial difficulties in maintaining them; and

WHEREAS, German immigrants, who formed the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod in the mid-1800s, came to the United States to find a place where they were free to exercise their religious beliefs and to live out their faith with vigor and confessional purity. A unique community of believers, they grew and quickly built schools, churches, hospitals, and orphanages across the nation. Over the past century and a half, the Lutheran Church has grown into a national church body with over 2.3 million members in more than 6,200 congregations across the United States, providing more than 1,000 grade schools and high schools, 1,300 early childhood centers, 10 colleges and universities, and 2 seminaries. Its congregations operate the largest Protestant parochial school system in America; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod sustains relationships and active mission work in 89 countries around the world. In the last five years, the Lutheran Church has awarded more than \$35 million through more than 900 domestic and international grants for emergency response and disaster relief, including putting up the first million dollars and continuing to provide finance for the Nehemiah Project in New York. The Nehemiah Project has continued over the years to provide home ownership for thousands of families, many of them headed by single women, and

maintained an agency in New Orleans, Camp Restore, which rebuilt over 4,000 homes after Hurricane Katrina, through the blood, sweat, and tears of volunteers. The church's Lutheran Malaria Initiative has touched the lives of 1.6 million people in East Africa, especially those affected by disease, women and children. The church has also cared for the unmet health needs of thousands of people in dozens of the world's least developed countries, donating more than \$1 million in needed medicines in their mercy work overseas in the last few years alone, responding to virtually every recent major natural disaster, both domestically and abroad, using volunteer medical teams that were literally covered in the blood of disaster victims in Haiti and the tsunami that decimated Indonesia and India. The Lutheran Church also provides funding and leads programs for domestic community development, urban housing, and health and nutrition; and

WHEREAS, Religion in the United States is defined by a great adherence level and vibrant diversity in religious beliefs and practices. According to recent surveys, 83 percent of Americans identify with a religious denomination, 40 percent state that they regularly attend services, and 58 percent say that they pray weekly; and

WHEREAS, The National Council of Churches lists 68,503,456 members in the United States today; and

WHEREAS, Unlike most developed nations, a majority of Americans claim that religion plays a very important role in their lives; and

WHEREAS, Many faiths have flourished in the United States, which makes the United States one of the most religiously diverse countries in the world. These faiths span the country's multicultural immigrant heritage and those founded within the country; and

WHEREAS, Heroism was humbly displayed by Catholic nuns during the Civil War, when over 600 sisters from 21 different communities nursed both Union and Confederate soldiers, all the way through the San Francisco Earthquake, the Civil Rights Movement, and Hurricane Katrina; and

WHEREAS, No matter the struggle and controversy at the time, Catholic sisters have opened orphanages, schools, hospitals, colleges, universities, and provided other social services for millions of Americans; and

WHEREAS, Sister Ignatia Gavin, C.S.A., who successfully advocated that alcoholism be treated as a medical condition, provided vital support for Alcoholics Anonymous during its establishment; and

WHEREAS, Catholic nuns have contributed to science, such as pioneering research in infrared spectrography by Sister Miriam Stimson, O.P., which supported the discovery of DNA; and

WHEREAS, Since 1980, while working for social justice and human rights, nine American sisters have been murdered overseas; and

WHEREAS, In 2003, there were more than 15.4 million emergency room visits and more than 86 million outpatient visits to Catholic hospitals, especially impacting people living in areas where the only health facility is a Catholic one and low-income people who routinely rely on emergency rooms at charitable hospitals for primary health care; and

WHEREAS, Care provided by Catholic hospitals includes 629 hospitals, 12 percent of the total hospitals in the United States, with 120,311 beds, 5,512,632 admissions, 28,298,787 inpatient days, 100,032,817 outpatient days, \$98.6 billion in expenses, 640,894 in full-time equivalent staff, 2,486,769 Medicare discharges, and 976,802 Medicaid discharges, treating about one in six Americans in a Catholic health care facility each year; and

WHEREAS, Medical Assistance Programs, an interdenominational Christian organization, supports work at more than 650 clinics and hospitals. It helps people of all faiths in 118 countries and uses 99.1 percent of its funds on program expenses; and

WHEREAS, Lutheran Services in America, an alliance of Lutheran Church bodies and their over 300 social ministry organizations, join hands to love and serve our neighbors and create opportunities for people throughout the United States and the Caribbean. These organizations work on health care, aging, disability, community development, housing, and related issues, and have aggregated annual incomes over \$16.6 billion, touching the lives of one in 50 Americans each year; and

WHEREAS, Thirty-five percent of total contributions in 2010, totaling \$100.63 billion, went to faith-based charities, including churches. Religious groups received over one-third of all contributions in the United States, and faith-based donations increased 0.8 percent from the previous year; and

WHEREAS, Catholic Charities USA's members bring hope and support for approximately 10 million people a year regardless of religious, social, or economic background. They provide a myriad of essential services in their communities, ranging from health care and job training to food and housing; and

WHEREAS, In the United States, Catholic Charities USA provides one of the largest voluntary social service networks; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, 3,301 local Catholic Charities offices, as reported by 171 Catholic Charities USA member agencies and affiliates, provided services to 10,270,292 unduplicated clients, offering client services 15,448,529 times. They provide food, building strong communities, strengthening families, respond to disasters, and meet basic human needs; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, according to a survey conducted by the Chronicle of Philanthropy, Catholic Charities USA was one of only four charities among the top 400 charitable organizations to experience an increase in donations in 2009; and

WHEREAS, Christian Blind Mission International granted \$112,982,826 in aid last year, whose teams of volunteers included medical professionals to treat the blind and perform thousands of operations to restore those who live with disabilities around the world; and

WHEREAS, Matthew 25 Ministries (M25M) is an international humanitarian relief organization helping the poorest of the poor locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally regardless of race, creed, or political persuasion by providing basic necessities, skill development, and disaster relief across the United States and worldwide. Since its founding

in 1990, M25M has sent 71,717,889 pounds of aid across the United States and into more than 35 countries worldwide; and

WHEREAS, World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision provides emergency assistance to children and families affected by natural disasters and civil conflict, and works with communities to develop long-term solutions to alleviate poverty and advocate for justice on behalf of the poor. In the 2010 fiscal year, World Vision was able to give \$549.5 million towards approximately 80 disaster response efforts, with nearly 80 percent of their funding coming from private sources; and

WHEREAS, The mission of the Church World Service is to erase hunger and poverty while promoting peace and justice throughout the world by introducing sustainable local development initiatives to the individuals they seek to help, including disaster relief, and refugee assistance all around the world which is delivered from 36 refugee resettlement offices in affiliates in 21 states. Since 1946, the Church World Service has found new homes for more than 450,000 refugees in the United States, and from July 2010 to June 2011 has spent \$82,029,444 toward their mission with 46.7 percent of their entire expenses going toward refugee resettlement and assistance as well as 19.4 percent toward disaster relief and recovery, with 3.7 percent of their \$82,029,444 in expenses going to administrative services; and

WHEREAS, While the Salvation Army was first founded in 1867 in London under the name “The Christian Mission,” it soon grew to an international organization providing several services to the community, and through just the 2011 Red Kettle Campaign alone, the Salvation Army was able to raise a record \$147.6 million that it uses in its various ministries, including a prisoner rehabilitation program that allows for prisoners to be released into the custody of the Salvation Army to receive assistance in job training, employment opportunities all while cooperating with parole rules, and extending services for the prisoner’s family; and

WHEREAS, The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) was first founded by George Williams as a place where young men could study the Bible and be protected from life on the streets. Today the YMCA is in more than 10,000 neighborhoods all across the United States and is made up of about 20,000 full-time staff and 500,000 volunteers dedicated to working with 9 million youth and 12 million adults across the country for, in 2010; and

WHEREAS, The YMCA offers after school programs for kindergarten through middle school aged children, which offers them activities to explore their interests and talents while providing a safe and healthy place to learn foundational skills, develop healthy, trusting relationships, and build self-reliance by learning the values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. The Achievers Program helps teens of color raise their academic standards, develop a positive sense of self, build character, explore

diverse college and career options, and learn from role models who inspire them to greater heights; and

WHEREAS, For over 100 years the American Jewish Community (AJC) continues its efforts to promote pluralistic and democratic societies where all minorities are protected. AJC is an international think tank and advocacy organization that attempts to identify trends and problems early, and take action. Its key areas of focus are combating anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry, promoting pluralism and shared democratic values, supporting Israel's quest for peace and security, advocating for energy independence, and strengthening Jewish life. It spends \$40,715,000 in expenses, 10 percent to administration, 14 percent to marketing, and 76 percent to program services; and

WHEREAS, The Jewish Federations of North America represent 157 Jewish Federations and over 300 network communities, which raise and distribute more than \$3 billion annually for social welfare, social services, and educational needs; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran World Relief donates 90 cents of every dollar on 100 local partners and their program services. They collaborate to improve health and education in 35 countries each year by training local women and men to produce local foods, dig low-cost wells, and protect and restore their local environments; and

WHEREAS, The Christian Foundation for Children and Aging (CFCA) has brought hope to families living in poverty in 22 countries for almost 30 years. CFCA is backed by 250,000 sponsors who are supporting more than 300,000 children, youth, and elderly worldwide. Despite a difficult economic climate, total contributions and revenues exceeded \$109.3 million in 2010, increasing from the previous year; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, Islamic Relief USA (IRUSA) provided \$167,924,852 in aid to many communities without regard to race, religion, social, or economic status. Islamic Relief USA provides emergency disaster relief, and developed projects to support education, income generation, orphans, health and nutrition, and water and sanitation. In addition to its international work, IRUSA also supports domestic projects to help disadvantaged communities in the United States through community grants, toy fairs for children, financial assistance, and health care; and

WHEREAS, Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian organization, that served a record 81,399 families worldwide in fiscal year 2011 through construction, rehabilitation, and repairs. Believing that every man, woman, and child should have a simple, decent place to live, they continue to work to eliminate substandard housing and homelessness worldwide and provide adequate, affordable shelter; and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Committee on Relief, a nonprofit global humanitarian aid organization of the United Methodist Church, works in more than 80 countries worldwide to alleviate suffering caused by war, conflict, or natural disaster; and

WHEREAS, Child Fund International spent \$187.2 million dollars on services for impoverished children. Its programs help these children to

become strong and positive young adults, parents, and leaders in their communities; and

WHEREAS, Since 1985 Christian Action has built 462 winter homes for Tibetan families and 10 schools and 2 clinics. In total, there are over 20,000 people directly helped by Christian Action each year. Starting in 2008, Christian Action offered over 200 scholarships that pay for school fees, boarding fees, and teaching materials to help students with financial difficulties to complete their studies; and

WHEREAS, Since 1883 the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, one of the oldest and most successful charitable organizations in the world, made up of nearly 700,000 volunteers and programs in 142 countries, which together provides more than \$595 million in services, has helped over 14 million people. In 2010, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul provided \$593,932,658 in services through their food pantries, thrift stores, dining halls, housing assistance, and disaster relief programs; and

WHEREAS, The Knights of Columbus awarded \$1.5 million scholarships to 642 students in the 2010–11 academic year to students studying at various Catholic colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines through several scholarship programs. Since its establishment the Knights of Columbus has donated \$1.406 billion to charity work, and provided more than 653 million hours of volunteer service in support of charitable initiatives through partnerships with the Special Olympics, the Global Wheelchair Mission, and Habitat for Humanity; and

WHEREAS, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints established the Perpetual Education Fund in 2001 to aid those in developing regions make a better life for themselves through higher education. To date, 50,000 participants in over 50 countries have benefited from the program with most participants completing their education in 2.4 years and gaining employment; and

WHEREAS, Since 1998 hundreds of thousands of Mormon Helping Hands volunteers for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints have donated millions of hours of service to their communities. These volunteers in their trademark yellow shirts help people whose lives have been affected by natural disasters and other emergencies. Mormon Helping Hands volunteers also partner with government and nonprofit organizations to support and improve the communities where they live; and

WHEREAS, Christians, such as Lyman Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and William Lloyd Garrison, have dedicated their lives to bringing social justice to America and worked tirelessly to expand and strengthen the abolitionist movement; and

WHEREAS, The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, whose support came primarily from the church, worked to advance the cause of civil rights in America but in a nonviolent manner. The church was a vital part of the lives of African Americans in the South, and church leaders played a noteworthy role in Southern black communities; and

WHEREAS, According to Dr. Bernard LaFayette, the Civil Rights Movement and the broader freedom struggle became the cornerstone of social change in modern America because of the guiding force of religion and principles rooted in faith and Judeo-Christian ethics. For the better part of a century, the faith-based struggle to eradicate racial discrimination and injustice in the United States has been a major source of spiritual and more regeneration, of hope and renewal, for oppressed people across the globe; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature affirms all of the following:

(a) Faith-based organizations of all creeds and denominations serve their neighbors in need, and have a vested interest in our society with much to contribute to our future; and

(b) Throughout our nation's history, the work carried out, very often at personal cost, by people of faith continues to benefit and serve our neighbors in need throughout our communities; and

(c) The unique spirit of service and sacrifice lived out by the faithful are the fruit of values and vision set into action, benefiting and serving the lives of many in this country and this world; and

(d) The charity, kindness, and goodwill given to so many people is directly shaped and developed by religion, and they thrive as a result of the giving spirit nourished by religion's free practice and teaching; and

(e) Religious organizations and the faith they inspire have cultivated countless good deeds of mercy and love, which are a valuable asset that helps to address the many needs in our society; and

(f) The freedom to allow all faiths to flourish and the protected liberty of religious conscience profoundly shape America's history and destiny as religious people fulfill their mission, calling, and commitment to serve; and

(g) Religious freedom affirms and sustains much strength and health in the day-to-day lives of millions, while governmental intrusion upon it stifles the good being done and plugs the wellspring of life lived for the benefit for others; and

(h) Tolerance by the government toward people of faith is constitutionally guaranteed and necessary to allow an unimpeded flow of good that positively impacts and transforms lives; and

(i) An inestimable value and contribution to our American standard of living comes from the free hearts of those whose faith and conscience who, motivated by the love of God, impel them to carry out care for their neighbor; and

(j) Constitutional protection from governmental discrimination or dictates against conscience ensures a strong and vibrant democracy; and

(k) The government may not prescribe morals, teachings, practices, or beliefs for churches or any other religious body, for it has no right to do so, but is instead to allow for the free exercise of our First Amendment religious rights; and

(l) Acts of mercy come from conscience, and many consciences are patterned by their faith, moving with the confidence and courage that comes from conviction; and

(m) Firmly upholding the right of conscience and cherishing the exercise of religious independence and expression of religious belief as American foundations animate the freedom that belongs to all, that we may live in liberty and happiness; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.